(245)

(59) LIBERTY 1976

OFFICIAL - INFORMAL
CONFIDENTIAL

October 19, 1971

R

J. Owen Zurhellen, Jr., Esquire
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim
American Embassy
Tel Aviv, Israel

Dear Owen:

Thank you for your letter of September 30 on the Liberty. I have, of course, shown it to Roy and the following has his concurrence as well as that of others most directly involved here in the Department. We still have not raised this with the Pentagon, nor do we intend to, as long as we remain in this informal phase.

Roy wants you to know, "We haven't ruled out the principle of nominal payment. The question is how nominal." (The lawyers in L don't like the word "nominal" so this is not for passing on to Michael.) It seems to us that at the present juncture the Israelis have had offered to them a graceful way to pick up the baton. You could go back to Michael and say we accept their version (which may be true; our files are unhelpful) that your conversation with Michael was the first time they had heard about our proposal to initiate discussions on a technical level. Michael can then say that this idea, which they are hearing for the first time, sounds interesting and they would like to begin talks. And voila! we are dealing with the matter in a businesslike way. On what ground could they possibly object to engaging us in discussions? They never tire of insisting on negotiations in other matters. We'd appreciate your thoughts.

Sincerely,

H. H. Stackhouse

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY John Kelley DATE 1/24/83
RDS☐ or XDS☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED☐ RELEASABLE☑
RELEASE DENIED☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS